

Vietnam Red Cross Society Hosts Workshop Introducing Cutting-edge Forecast-based Financing Project

Ha Noi, Vietnam – The Vietnam Red Cross Society (VNRC) hosted a workshop on November 28, 2018 to launch an innovative project utilizing the Forecast-based Financing (FbF) mechanism to stage anticipatory humanitarian action in response to extreme weather events.

The pilot project, "FbF Ready," uses high resolution weather forecasts to predict the onset of heat waves and carry out appropriate corresponding early actions to reduce the suffering of vulnerable populations in Hanoi, including street workers and the elderly. The project, which is supported by the German Red Cross (GRC) and conducted in collaboration with the Vietnam Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Climate Change (IMHEN), will build the capacity of the VNRC to apply the FbF mechanism to respond to other disasters in Vietnam such as flooding and cyclones.

The workshop brought together a broad coalition of stakeholders, including representatives from Vietnamese government ministries, United Nations agencies, international and domestic non-governmental organizations, and fellow Red Cross Societies. VNRC leadership will also be present, as will district and city-level staff.

"Early actions will ensure safety to people. VNRC will replicate the FbF methodology to other hazards after this successful FbF project," said Nguyen Thu Ha, Head of Disaster Management and Project Director at VNRC Headquarters.

Workshop attendees learned about the FbF model and public health risks associated with heat waves, and were encouraged to engage in panel discussions, discuss opportunities for collaboration, and express their interest in future engagements with the project.

Opportunities for FbF learning in Vietnam

The Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement launched its first FbF pilot projects in 2013.¹ Today, the mechanism has been adopted by 22 Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, including three in the Southeast Asian region (Philippines, Bangladesh, and Vietnam).



Dr. Hung, Vice President of the Vietnamese Red Cross, speaks to workshop participants.

"FbF changes the way we work – across better anticipation and preparedness to early action" said Jerome Faucet, Head of the German Red Cross Vietnam Project Office.

"FbF Ready" marks two important firsts for the use of the FbF mechanism. It is not only the first project conducted in an urban setting, and but also first project responding to heat wave events.

Heat waves pose a significant public health risk to urban populations, particularly in high-density cities such as Hanoi, where average temperatures have risen steadily in recent years.² The effect of heat waves in cities is worsened by the "heat island effect," caused by a combination of human activity, the burning of fossil fuels, and the dense clustering of buildings obstructing air flow.

While "FbF Ready" focuses specifically on heat waves, FbF holds great potential for improving anticipatory actions to other natural disasters in Vietnam, a country considered among the most hazard-prone areas in the Asia Pacific region.³ At the conclusion of the project in 2020, the VNRC will be equipped to replicate the FbF mechanism and act as a regional leader in anticipatory humanitarian action.

(1) "Forecast-based Financing: A new era for the humanitarian system," International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2018.

(2) Thi Thanh Hiên Pham, Thi Huyen Ai Tong, Van Cu Pham. "Becoming Urban: How Urbanization Influences the Loss of Arable Land in Peri-urban Hanoi," Computational Science and its Applications, 2013.

(3) "Vietnam" in "Disaster Risk Management Programs for Priority Countries," World Bank, 2011. Pages 106-120.